



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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FCC ANNOUNCES RELEASE OF MOBILE BROADBAND SPECTRUM FORECAST

Washington, D.C. – Today, the Federal Communications Commission announced the release of a white paper entitled, “Mobile Broadband: The Benefits of Additional Spectrum.” This detailed technical and economic forecast of mobile broadband market trends details the looming spectrum crunch in a concrete, data-driven fashion. The National Broadband Plan recognized the exponential growth of mobile data usage and recommended that the Commission make available 500 megahertz (MHz) of new spectrum for wireless broadband within ten years, including 300 MHz for mobile flexible use within five years. In addition, the President directed in a June 28, 2010, Executive Memorandum that 500 MHz of new spectrum be made available for mobile and fixed broadband use.

Spectrum is a national resource used for all forms of wireless communication, including the use of smartphones. Data usage over wireless networks is rapidly increasing as more consumers surf the web, check email, and watch video on mobile devices.

In his opening remarks today, FCC Chairman Genachowski stated, “The explosive growth in mobile communications is outpacing our ability to keep up. If we don’t act to update our spectrum policies for the 21st century, we’re going to run into a wall – a spectrum crunch – that will stifle American innovation and economic growth and cost us the opportunity to lead the world in mobile communications.”

Today’s forecast demonstrates that the amount of mobile data demanded by American consumers is likely to exceed capacity of our wireless networks in the near-term, and that meeting this demand by making additional spectrum available is likely to create significant value for the mobile economy. In addition, new mobile broadband spectrum will support innovation in other important areas – such as breakthrough tools to improve education through mobile online learning, enhancing health care through potentially life-saving remote diagnostics, and promoting energy efficiency by supporting the smart grid.

Some of the key findings in the white paper are:

- Within the next five years, the spectrum deficit is likely to approach 300 megahertz.
- This spectrum crunch will be driven by significant growth of mobile broadband traffic, on the order of 35 times recent levels.
- Mobile broadband growth is likely to outpace the ability of technology and network improvements to keep up by an estimated factor of three.
- Meeting this need may create \$120 billion in spectrum value, with hundreds of billions more in total value to the economy.

The National Broadband Plan noted that making new spectrum available has historically taken between 6 and 13 years. Today's forecast of the looming spectrum crunch makes clear the need for timely action to realize the wireless economy of the future.

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